

Condom Safety

By DR. BRIAN A. SMITH (RET)

Dr. Brian A. Smith (retired) was The seizure of more than 40,000 "knock-off" condoms in Puerto Rico this past March, many destined for Central Florida, has raised safety concerns. HCompanies in China have been mislabeling substandard condoms under several well-known brand names as well as "no-name" condoms and selling them at greatly discounted prices around the world. These condoms routinely fall below the government standards set for acceptable "fail rates" which is a measure of how likely it is that any particular condom will burst while in use. More than 4 million condoms were seized before being exported from China but many more made it out of that country before the raids by government agencies. While the effects on Central Florida are not known at this time, what could have been a huge public health disaster has appeared to have been mostly averted. Still, consumers should be prudent in their selection process. When making a purchase, take a good look at the package — if anything seems "off" or if they are being sold at a "really great price" — you may want to exercise a bit of caution. Which brings me to the next topic — types of condoms. There are two broad categories of condoms — prophylactic condoms and novelty condoms. Prophylactic condoms are designed to prevent pregnancy and reduce transmission of STDs and HIV. Novelty condoms are not. So, how do you know what type of condom you have? It's not always easy to tell; some prophylactic condoms have the same characteristics as novelty condoms.



The most common type of novelty condoms are flavored condoms — but not all flavored condoms are novelty condoms, some are also prophylactic. Novelty condoms are condoms that are not designed to be used for sex. They include joke condoms used for gag gifts (no pun intended) such as the "foot-long" condom. Sometimes people don't realize that novelty condoms are just that — novelties. This lack of realization has the potential to make something that started out as a joke become dangerous. Most novelty condoms are labeled "Not for use for sex" but recent events have shown us that the mislabeling of condoms is far more widespread than previously thought. Cost is not a good gauge as novelty condoms may be more or less expensive than regular condoms. The price depends on what the novelty condoms are made of and how they are being marketed. In general, flavored condoms don't cost more than other condoms however price is not a gauge for how safe it is. No novelty condom should be considered safe unless it explicitly states that the condom is safe for vaginal and anal intercourse on the package. Novelty condoms should not be used as protection during oral sex. Flavored condoms are available at many drugstores and sex shops, with many more options available online. Some businesses place novelty condoms in a different area of the store than where they shelve the condoms that can actually be used for safe sex; some businesses do not. You want to make certain the condoms are actually approved for use during sex. Novelty condoms are not always clearly marked but a little common sense will help determine if they are being sold strictly as a novelty item. What products are next to them? Lollipops and ice-cube trays shaped like sex organs? They're probably novelty condoms.

Oral sex is the *raison-d'être* of flavored condoms. Before using a flavored condom for anything other than oral sex, read the packaging they came in. If the box says not to use the condoms for vaginal sex, you should avoid using them for anal sex as well.

Want safety to taste good too? Consider sticking to well known condom brands' flavored varieties, and check the box; there should be a statement about their suitability for the prevention of disease transmission and pregnancy during any sex act. Remember — once a flavored condom is put on, the only other place it is meant to go is a place that has taste buds. The chemicals used to add flavor may act as an irritant in the vaginal and anal canal. Irritated mucous membranes are much less likely to repel microorganisms of all kinds. This is an important part of sexual health, and you should never give a novelty condom to someone without telling them that it is a novelty — just because you know the difference does not mean your friend does.

Have a healthy and fulfilling sex life without placing yourself and others in danger.

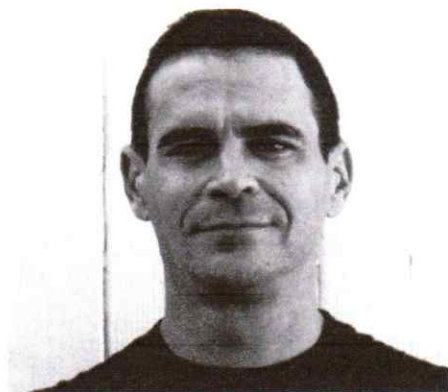
MIRACLE OF LOVE TURKEY DROP

This is another day and another year we all have come this far by faith.

Miracle of Love is having another Thanksgiving Turkey Drop. Beginning Monday, September 25, 2017, through Monday, October 30, 2017, Miracle of Love will be accepting drop offs, please read notices that will be posted so no one will be left out. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Ira Darnell Westbrook

BRIAN SMITH'S RED RIBBON BIO



Dr. Brian A. Smith (retired) was appointed to the Planning Council for the Orlando EMA in January 2016 after 30 years involvement in the HIV+ community in Los Angeles.

He received his doctorate (chiropractic) in 1987, finished post-graduate studies to become a certified internist in 1996 and qualified as a naturopathic physician in 1999. His formal introduction to the HIV+ community began in 1984 with participation in a small support group run by the Reverend Louise Hay, which blossomed into the Hayride, a weekly support group with more than 700 people in attendance by 1987. Reverend Hay founded Hay House Publishing, which still publishes many inspiring works by and for PLWHA. He attended the first professional presentation by Robert Gallo, M.D., at UCLA. In 1988 he became the owner and director of "The Health Affair" on Sunset Boulevard at the border between Beverly Hills and West Hollywood, one of the first private practices to focus on HIV management. It was founded by Donald Dickenson, Ph.D. (Nutrition), and Garyx Zimmerman, D.C., in 1978. Dr. Dickenson authored the first book detailing the impact of nutrition on

the immune system with a focus on HIV. Published in 1984, *How to Fortify Your Immune System* provided some hope at a time when there were no treatments available — some readers may recall the days of AL-721, SPV-30, dextran sulfate, concentrated aloe vera extract and hydrogen peroxide-based therapies, and the p24 antigen/antibody tests and B2M levels, before testing for the virus was invented. Dr. Smith continued the practice until 2012 at which time several of the patients that predated his involvement with the practice were living very full lives. His successor continues with these same patients who were told in the earliest days their life-span could be numbered in months.

From this start Dr. Smith's involvement grew to include being a speaker, educator, researcher, writer and dedicated volunteer at many organizations including Being Alive, AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA, founder Nutrition Task Force, 1990), Northern Lights Alternatives, the Los Angeles Center for Living (1989), Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS-LA), the Computer AIDS Information Network (CAIN) and the Nutritional Products Buyer's Club (director, 1990). In 1990, he was appointed a Medical and Scientific Advisory Board Member of Search Alliance, the forerunner of AIDS ReSearch Alliance, one of the oldest research organizations dedicated to HIV and AIDS research in the country. He became a faculty member in the HIV Nurse Clinician program (Pacific AIDS Education & Training Center, funded by Ryan White Part E) at the University of Southern

California in 1990 which lasted until 2000; he developed and taught a post-graduate program for HIV care for OMDs (Oriental Medical Doctors, 1993) as well as teaching on the same subject for several continuing education programs for medical doctors including programs at Scripps Mercy Hospital (both in San Diego) and USC. He authored the first professional article outlining a projected research project to be published in peer-reviewed chiropractic research literature (*The Internist*, 1997) and, in the mid-1990s, was the Los Angeles-based clinical investigator on two nationwide studies on HIV. One was funded by the NIH, which investigated the use of complementary and alternative therapies, and the second studied the effects of growth-hormone preparations on HIV-infected persons with wasting syndrome. He was a commentator for Pacifica Radio-KPFK, covering the 6th International AIDS Conference in June 1990, and in 1991 and 1992 produced and directed the cable television show "Your Health, Naturally."

Since being appointed to the Planning Council, Dr. Smith has become the vice-chair of the membership committee and has represented the Council at several events including the "National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day" in September, the "I Am a Queen Bee" and the Orange County Employees Health Fair in February of this year. He also has represented the Council before several student organizations on the campuses of University of Central Florida and Valencia College, East.